



## **UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE PRESS RELEASE**

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### **U.S. SECRET SERVICE AND COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE HOST INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Beginning August 27, 2002, the United States Secret Service and the Colombian National Police (DIJIN) will host an international seminar in Bogotá, Colombia on counterfeit currency. The seminar will focus on the dismantling of international crime cartels dedicated to the production and worldwide distribution of counterfeit U.S dollars manufactured in Colombia.

Police officials from 17 Latin American countries, along with representatives from international law enforcement organizations (INTERPOL, EUROPOL, SECI) will attend the “International Counterfeit Money Seminar: A Latin American Perspective on the U.S. Dollar.”

“The prevalence of counterfeiting leaves little question that the mission of protecting our financial and critical infrastructure is central to the mission of homeland security,” said U.S. Secret Service Director Brian L. Stafford. “This conference is the product of our strong working relationships with the Colombian National Police.”

In just the last three years, working together, DIJIN and the Secret Service have seized nearly \$113 million in counterfeit currency and have dismantled operations that could have produced billions of dollars in counterfeit U.S. dollar bills.

The Secret Service opened a resident office in Bogota in 1996. As countries throughout South and Central America “dollarize” – adopt U.S. currency as their own national currency – the office expanded its staff and increased its work with Colombian authorities.

The U.S. Secret Service was created in 1865 with the sole purpose of suppressing counterfeit currency. While the agency’s responsibilities have expanded to include presidential protection, its investigative mission still focuses on protecting the infrastructure of the nation’s financial systems.

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